

# Health & Habits – Take The Long Road To Success

Enjoy the process of swapping out habits that make you feel like shit and replacing them with other habits that make you feel enriched, writes Kate Ashley-Norman. The changes will happen without you even realising it.

**I have a habit at the end of the working day to leave a piece of work unfinished, writes Kate Ashley-Norman.**

The document remains open on my screen – I simply close the lid of my laptop and walk away.

I know that this act is contrary to the sage recommendation to finish what you're doing, tidy your workspace and make a definite delineation between the end of the day and the start of your evening.

However, I like to jump straight into a piece of work the next morning. If I'm halfway through something already, it feels easier just to step back into it and carry on where I left off.

## Advice bombardment

Scrolling through social media these days, you are bombarded with advice about improving the way you lead your life. Work out. Drink more water. Walk 10,000 steps a day. The 10 daily habits that will change your life. Daily habits of successful people. It's all very exhausting. They tend to make one feel pretty inadequate.

The thing is, they do all have a point. If you stop the junk and move a bit you will feel physically (and mentally) better. If you ditch the nightly Netflix marathons and pick up a book, you will feed your mind with richer information.

## Read the newspapers

I bought the Sunday papers for the first time in years one very

wet weekend a few weeks ago. When I would normally be aimlessly scrolling through my X feed, I instead sat and read the main section from start to finish. Did I feel intellectually lighter the following day? Probably.

## One step beyond

Most of you reading this have probably come to a place in your life that has involved hard work, taking chances, a fair amount of 'winging it', successes and failures, all done on the backend late nights, not enough sleep, expanding waistlines and one too many hangovers. And if you're the wrong side of 50, you are fully aware that your body definitely makes itself known if you go that step too far.

So, listen to it.

## Don't do all or nothing

You certainly don't have to pay thousands of hard-earned pounds to online gurus to tell you things you already know. At the same time, don't put massive pressure on yourself. The reason why so many people quit when it comes to changing bad habits into good is that they try to do too much all at once, massively overthink it and apply a complete all or nothing style of thinking into their behaviours.

Change can be slow and ponderous, so the tangible benefits of giving up those comfort foods after a stressful day can obscure the deep-seated benefits that are going on inside, while having no visible benefit to the

Kate Ashley-Norman is a director of VAST PR & Marketing. Tel: 07904 345354



outside. This doesn't sit well with our instant gratification society, where a trip through the local drive-thru can deliver your favourite food in a matter of minutes. It is too easy to convince ourselves that one burger won't make that much difference.

## Making good habits stick

When I was working as a psychotherapist, I always referred back to Darren Hardy, author of *The Compound Effect* when helping people through the mental gymnastics of eliminating the bad habits and instilling the good.

'It's not the big things that add up in the end', wrote Hardy. 'It's the hundreds, thousands or millions of little things that separate the ordinary from the extraordinary'.

So don't get caught up in the perfectionism of creating an Instagram ready routine to wow your 32 followers. Just enjoy the process of swapping out habits that make you feel like shit and replacing them with other habits that make you feel enriched.

The changes will happen without you even realising it. 